

McLEAN, Va. — President Reagan has started his re-election campaign with a public-relations attempt to demonstrate that he and his Administration have been serious about controlling nuclear weapons and reducing the risk of nuclear war. But this public-relations blitz does nothing to change President Reagan's dismal record on the nuclear war issue, which is critical to our survival.

The blitz began with the President's own deceptively placatory speech designed to convince our allies that he really wished accommodation with the Soviet Union. Next, Paul H. Nitze, his negotiator for intermediate-range nuclear forces talks at Geneva, and then Edward L. Rowny, his strategic arms reduction talks negotiator, appeared in print and on television, arguing that the Administration's negotiating positions were sound and flexible. Secretary of State George P. Shultz said in Stockholm on Jan. 17 that Washington was ready "for early progress" once arms control negotiations were resumed.

In fact, the President deserves scant credit for any improvement in his arms control policy. Only under pressure from people in this country and Europe did he initiate any arms control negotiations. The talks on intermediate-range forces were started 10 months into his term and then only at European leaders' insistence — demands generated by the public outcry over the forthcoming deployment of Pershing 2 and cruise missiles. The strategic arms reduction talks were not begun until 17 months after Mr. Reagan took over and again only as a result of widespread American public alarm among freeze-movement activists, physicians, scientists, lawyers and other concerned organizations.

What in fact has the President done to curtail the arms race?

- He postponed indefinitely the ne-

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Poor Record on Arms

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By Herbert Scoville Jr.

negotiations on a comprehensive test ban treaty even though these talks had been supported by every Republican and Democratic President since Dwight D. Eisenhower. The need to do more nuclear testing was cited as the reason for putting off the talks.

- He sent the Threshold Test Ban and Peaceful Nuclear Explosion Treaties, signed by Presidents Richard M. Nixon and Gerald R. Ford, back to Moscow for revision.

- He refused to resume discussion on limiting anti-satellite weapons and instead moved with high priority to begin testing an advanced weapons system for destroying Soviet space vehicles.

- He proposed vast and expensive programs for ballistic missile defense systems, which could require abrogation of the Anti-ballistic Mis-

sile Treaty of 1972, the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and the Limited Test Ban Treaty of 1963.

begin, the Russians have predictably broken off negotiations and begun to pursue an equally misguided course — deploying more missiles aimed at Western Europe. The only ray of light in these talks was the so-called walk-in-the-woods of Mr. Nitze and his counterpart, Yuli Kvitsinsky, in which the chief American negotiator privately offered to postpone deployment of the Pershing 2 missiles. Yet, in the aftermath of this unofficial move, the director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, Eugene V. Rostow, was forced to resign for his "overzealousness."

The Administration has been required to modify its original proposal several times under Western European pressure, yet it still has not faced up, even implicitly, to the real roadblock in these negotiations — the

President's public-relations blitz

Negotiations have been used not merely to cover inaction in real arms control but also to justify the procurement of new nuclear war fighting weapons as bargaining chips.

The President's original position at the intermediate-range forces talks — the so-called zero option for eliminating all Soviet nuclear weapons aimed at Europe in exchange for American agreement to forego the deployment of cruise and Pershing 2 missiles — was palpably nonnegotiable, and Administration spokesmen admitted that they expected no encouraging Soviet response until after the Pershing 2 and cruise missiles were deployed in Europe.

Now that such deployment has

British and French strategic nuclear weapons aimed at the Soviet Union. It is not surprising for the Soviet Union, the only country in the Eastern bloc with nuclear weapons, to be unwilling to ignore these forces — 162 missiles being modernized with multiple warheads. Only now, when the Russians have broken off the intermediate-range forces talks and removed Mr. Reagan's cover for failure to deal seriously with this problem, has the Administration given even the slightest indication of being willing to merge talks about intermediate-range forces with negotiations about reducing intercontinental weapons — a possible politically acceptable tactic for dealing with this thorny issue.

The strategic arms reduction talks are also headed nowhere — Mr. Rowny's optimism, notwithstanding. No

date has been set for their resumption. In this case, too, our initial negotiating position was clearly unacceptable — and would have decreased American security had it been accepted. Its primary weakness — that it would have increased the vulnerability of the weapons by which both the Americans and Russians deter a first strike and thus would have made a nuclear war more likely — was recognized by the bipartisan commission on the MX missile. The American position was subsequently modified, but as long as Mr. Reagan insists that the MX and the Trident 2 missiles be the mainstays of the American force, he will be undermining the stability of the nuclear balance.

Now Mr. Rowny has expressed optimism that the Russians will soon return to the table and negotiate seriously. Yet he admits that our proposals, which he recently discussed with President Reagan, are no different from those presented last October and that the Russians have shown little interest in them. In fact, Yuri V. Andropov's death makes it even more unlikely that talks will be resumed.

Mr. Rowny also proclaims that Washington is at last willing to discuss trade-offs of Soviet and American advantages in certain classes of weapons. Such trade-offs are, of course, the essence of any successful arms control negotiations, and yet it is only after three years in office that Mr. Reagan is prepared to discuss such a deal.

Given this record of delayed action, cover-ups and political posturing, it is hardly surprising that the American people are skeptical about the President's seriousness about arms control. The President was successful in getting some gullible Congressmen to support the procurement of MX missiles because they did not want to be blamed for his arms control failure. But in the absence of any negotiations, it is unlikely that he will be equally successful in conning the American people in this election year. This explains his real concern about the suspension of all nuclear weapons talks with Moscow.

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